IFES Quarterly Report: January 1 – March 31, 2005

East Timor: Development of National Electoral Framework

Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening / IFES
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Project Period: **February 22, 2005 – February 21, 2006**
Total Budget: **$500,000**　　**Expenses Recorded to Date**: **$1,293**

RESULTS

IFES electoral support activities delivered significant inputs to the electoral framework during the initial six weeks of the program period. These include:

Developing Procedures and Regulations for the National Level Election

- IFES' CNE Election Management Advisor I met with stakeholders to formulate observations and 'lessons learned' from the independent electoral commission's oversight of the voter registration process and Suco and Aldeia elections in Oecussi, Bobonaro and Baucau, Manatuto, and Los Palos.
- CNE Election Management Advisor II was identified. A two-phase visit has been tentatively scheduled and will result in the creation of an assessment for the next rounds of Suco and Aldeia elections as well as long-term recommendations for CNE regarding the national elections.

Developing Capacity to Manage the National Voter Registration and Database

- IFES' Senior Information Technology/Voter Registration Specialist conducted an assessment of the current voter registration database to identify areas in which assistance is required at the Technical Secretariat of Election Administration (STAE).
- The Information Technology/Database Specialist evaluated the status of the national voter registry system at STAE.
- After discussions with USAID East Timor, a Local IT Consultant has been identified to assist in the maintenance of the voter registration database and system.

Official Voter Education and Information Campaigns

- The Senior Civic Education Specialist developed concepts to launch various activities designed to contribute to a broad-based information campaign and civic education program.
- A Local Civic Education Consultant has been identified to enhance the voter information and communication efforts under the direction of the Senior Civic Education Specialist.

MAJOR ACTIVITIES THIS QUARTER

Program Component I: Developing the Role of the CNE

Provide assistance to the CNE in developing procedures and regulations for the national level elections

IFES' CNE Election Management Advisor I, Harun Din, arrived in East Timor before the Suco elections in Baucau, Manatuto, and Los Palos on March 23rd. Following the elections, Mr. Din attended meetings with stakeholders that generated observations and 'lessons learned' from their conduct. Specific problems identified included the need for additional voter education, a lack of awareness of the CNE's role, a lack of recognition of CNE election workers, and a lack of efficiency in voter registration efforts.

CNE Election Management Advisor II, Kerry Heisner, has been identified and a schedule of two short-term visits has been planned. In the first phase, beginning in mid-May, the EMA II will elaborate an assessment of CNE roles, performance, needs and recommendations for preparing for future rounds of the Suco and Aldeia elections. EMA II will be present for the May 12th and May 18th elections and remain through the June 27th and July 2nd Suco elections. In a second phase, EMA II will return to East Timor to evaluate and observe the final round of Suco elections, tentatively scheduled for July/August 2005. He will make recommendations for CNE's role in the next national elections.

Build Capacity of CNE Commissioners

CNE Advisor I conducted meetings and discussions with stakeholders to determine the status of CNE's efforts to create adequate procedures and regulations for both Suco elections and the 2007 national level elections. The CNE will be dissolved after the conclusion of Suco elections (tentatively in August 2005), and a new CNE will be nominated for the 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections. This dissolution of the CNE and nomination of new commissioners poses special challenges to providing continuity in efforts to improve the electoral administration framework. CNE Advisor I proposed two solutions that will be explored in more detail during Heisner's visit: the creation of a permanent or semi-permanent secretariat; and the creation of a manual consisting of procedures for future CNE commissioners and implementation of standards for future elections.

Possibility of Assistance to the CNE Drafting Laws and Regulations

After examining the legal framework, CNE Advisor I concluded that the CNE would require limited legal advice in their review of laws prepared by STAE. Additional support will be considered as is practicable and feasible during the visit of CNE Advisor II beginning in mid-May 2005.

Program Component II: Developing Capacity to Manage the National Voter Registration & Database at STAE

Develop the National Voter Registry & Database

IFES Information Technology/Voter Registration Specialist, Dr. Jorge Tirado, conducted an assessment on the current voter registration database to determine areas in which assistance is required and to present targeted IT training to selected STAE staff in order to achieve local capacity to maintain the database.

A second IT/Database Specialist, Paulo Sergio de Castro Siqueira, conducted meetings at STAE to determine the status of the voter registration database and system at STAE.

IFES has been working with the Technical Secretariat of Electoral Administration (STAE) and supporting the voter registration process since 2003. Following the STAE Information Technology Plan of February 2004, a new IT structure was implemented to support the process of voter registration in July 2004. The objective was to provide STAE with the appropriate technological support to carry out the voter registration function.

At present, STAE has an appropriate voter registration system to enable it to carry out its functions. Two individuals were trained and assigned to the Voter Registration/IT center to maintain the system that had been put in place. Since IFES Consultant Siqueira departed from East Timor in December 2004, however, STAE Director Tomas Cabral chose to reassign these individuals to support the Suco elections in the districts. As a result, during the IFES IT/Database Specialist's absence, the IT Center has been largely neglected. Despite Mr. Siqueira's strong recommendations concerning the necessity of implementing a process of constant revision in the voter database and the need to monitor the input of voter data forms, very few actions have been taken. Consequently, a number of significant problems were encountered upon Mr. Siqueira's return to East Timor in March 2005 (see Addendum). Mr. Siqueira was able to correct a number of these during his recent visit.

While the intention of this program is to build capacity within STAE, the particular human resources shortages faced by STAE present a significant challenge and may adversely affect the willingness of the Timorese population to participate in future elections. In order to build a sustainable capability for the IT activities in the STAE office, the IFES IT Consultant has discussed with STAE and USAID East Timor the need to hire up to two local IT officers in order to assist with daily maintenance of the voter registration system and the database.

One local IT consultant has since been identified and will be trained by the IT Specialist. A Memorandum of Understanding is currently being developed to formalize the relationship with STAE and the placement of the local IT consultant within STAE for an initial period of three months.

Program Component III: National Voter Education Strategy and Communications in Support of the CNE-STAE

Strengthening Civic Education Campaigns

The Senior Civic Education Specialist (CES), Eduardo Bogado, visited East Timor for the first of two planned phases under this agreement.

Meetings were held with a wide group of stakeholders, including donors and NGOs, to assess project proposals and planned voter and civic education activities and to determine the level of assistance needed and possible solutions.

A local civic education consultant (LCEC) has been identified to enhance the voter information efforts under the direction of the IFES Senior Civic Education Specialist. Specifically, the LCEC will be responsible for strengthening the voter education office at STAE, preparing press conferences and official communications, and communicating with the press. A Memorandum of Understanding is currently being developed to formalize the relationship with STAE. Additional activities under consideration include: the development of a civic education campaign in a local newspaper; the reprinting of voter information materials; the creation of a new voter information pamphlet; the dissemination of official information concerning STAE in radio and television campaigns; and potential partnerships with the University of Timor to enhance training for electoral workers.

ANTICIPATED ACTIVITIES NEXT QUARTER

- The IFES workplan will be finalized in response to the findings from Phase I consultant visits.
- IFES will deploy its second EMA to Timor Leste for May 11th – July 4th. He will assess CNE's duties to date, and make recommendations for next rounds of Suco and Aldeia elections.
- A local IT consultant will be hired to spearhead database maintenance efforts in mid-April and continue them to the evaluation period in late June. He will report to the IFES IT/Database Specialist and to IFES DC.   A second administrative officer/local IT consultant may be hired according to needs.
- A local civic education consultant will be hired and trained by the IFES CE Specialist to undertake efforts to identify opportunities for civic education campaigns. He will work under the direction of the IFES CE Specialist and report to IFES.
- A Memorandum of Understanding will be formalized with STAE concerning the relationships with the local IT and civic education consultants.
- The IFES CE Specialist will return at the end of the second quarter in late June.

The following problems were identified upon the return of IFES IT/Database Specialist Paulo Siqueira to East Timor in March 2005:

- Internet server was not operational and STAE had lost its connection with the Government network.   (This problem was corrected by the consultant with the replacement and reconfiguration of the Internet Server)
- Virus update (Problem corrected)
- Patch update (Problem corrected)
- UPS unreliable (Problem corrected)
- Air conditioning failure IT office (Problem corrected)
- The voter registration database had not been updated (Ongoing activity)
- Electors and card forms without control (Ongoing activity)
- Lack of management
- Lack of supplies
- Lack of generator supply
- Computers and printers broken
- Lack of toner

Specifically related with the voter registration process, problems detected during the data-entry activities in 2004 had not yet been addressed.   In particular, despite recommendations concerning the necessity of implementing a process of constant revision in the voter database, and also for the controls of the elector's forms, very few actions were taken.

Problems reported prior to our evaluation

In the report prepared by IFES consultant Paulo S. C. Siqueira, on the evaluation of the situation and the infrastructure of the Technical Secretariat of Electoral Administration (STAE) during the data entry process in 2004, a number of problems with the database creation process were brought to light.

Problems identified include:

- Names of villages that do not officially exist or with orthography different from the Diploma Ministerial No. 9/2004, of 14/07/2004
- Forms without signature or the voter's fingerprint
- Forms without name and / or without the census official's signature
- Date of birth less than 16 years old and / or in blank
- Date of completion of the form in blank
- Name of Official of Census not registered
- Incomplete data for the District / Suco / Sub District / Village

- Incomplete data for the voter's address
- The father's name and / or mother is blank
- Form of a district filled out in other
- The voter's name is blank;
- Voter registered more than once
- Number typed erroneously during the process of data-entry
- Voter registered more than once during the process of data-entry
- Information typed erroneously during the process of data-entry
- Some questionable forms were left and / or not canceled by the census official
- Forms without the official stamp of the Registration
- All the three copies of the voter registration form were sent to STAE
- Elector card has a different number from that contained in the Electoral Form Database